

Administrator's Update for 6/1/11

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

At the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting last week we had a large turnout of local business owners providing input on the county's sign ordinance. There were many ideas exchanged for improvements and some common problems discussed. We will be coming back to the board with a proposed ordinance in the coming weeks.

Other business at last week's meeting included the BCC approval to designate a portion of the Murdock Village Redevelopment Area as a Florida Brownfield Area—an Enhancement Zone. This designation may provide additional economic development incentives including job bonus refund, sales tax credit, and state loan guarantees.

Tourism promotion a success

Our Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau recently participated in an online promotion with the website WeJustGotBack.com. More than 17,000 people entered the month-long contest in April to win a four-night stay at Palm Island Resort with round-trip airfare compliments of AirTran Airlines. Entrants were encouraged to register for the Bureau's enewsletter. The winner, from Texas, will visit the area before the end of the year. Participating in promotions as these, Charlotte County is able to introduce prospective visitors to the destination and build awareness to those already familiar with the area through leveraging partnerships. This particular website receives 67,000 monthly visitors and the promotion was emailed twice to its database and promoted through a media release and social media channels.

Stump Pass update

The Stump Pass dredge and beach renourishment project was designed to restore safe navigation between Lemon Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, add sand back to the beach, help maintain water quality within Lemon Bay, and provide advanced protection against storm surge. All of the dredging and beach renourishment, including dune planting, has been completed. The aids to navigation will be installed under a separate contract, for which the bid process is currently underway.

Aqui Esta update

The Aqui Esta Drive improvements project has received final inspection and approval by the Florida Department of Transportation. This project provided for improvements to Aqui Esta Drive between US 41 and Bal Harbor Boulevard. Improvements included widening the existing roadway from two 9-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes, providing paved shoulders and sidewalk portions, raising portions of the roadway to reduce flooding, and intersection improvements at US 41.

Whidden Industrial Park

Last week the Charlotte Harbor community redevelopment area (CRA) advisory committee held a special meeting to discuss current conditions of the Whidden Industrial Park and its future direction. Area property owners attended and discussions included the need to repair or upgrade the drainage and roads in the area. County staff from the economic development office, public works, and utilities departments addressed these issues and gave an overview of the CRA and economic development incentives. Commissioners also were on hand to learn more about the area. The property owners plan to meet to further discuss their concerns and will report back to the advisory committee.

Summer camps

Summer camp has begun around the county at Harold Avenue Recreation Center, South County Regional Park, and the Charlotte County Historical Center. The first week of camp began May 26, with more sessions starting throughout July. Summer camp is available for full sessions or weekly sessions, giving families both financial and scheduling flexibility. For more information about all of the Charlotte County community services summer camps contact the South County Regional Park at 941.505.8686.